

Patient First[®]

SPRING SPORTS SAFETY

Remember this before your family hits the field

Spring means flowers, warmer temperatures, and the return of outdoor sports. Before you let any family athlete rush back onto the field, keep a few things in mind so everyone stays safe and healthy.

1. Covid-19 Safety

Organized youth sports are returning under strict safety guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each local jurisdiction has established its own rules for the return of organized sports. You can also help make it a safer and healthier season by following these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Stay Home when Appropriate - Staff, families, and players should stay home if they have tested positive for COVID-19, are showing COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have had a close contact with a person who has tested positive for or who has symptoms of COVID-19.

Masks - Require the consistent and correct use of masks, by making sure that staff, athletes, and spectators cover their noses and mouths.

Hand Hygiene - Athletes and coaches should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.

Cleaning and Disinfection - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on the field, court, or playing surface between uses as much as possible. Clean and disinfect shared objects and equipment (e.g., balls, bats) between uses. Consider closing areas such as drinking fountains that cannot be adequately cleaned and disinfected during a sporting event.

2. See your doctor

A sports physical can help determine if a child or any sports lover is physically ready to play ball or any other sport. It may also uncover a previously unknown condition that could prevent someone from playing. Many leagues require a sports physical before they allow anyone to participate. Contact your child's league for any necessary forms.

3. Check the equipment

Before heading out onto the field, go through last year's helmets, gloves, and all other equipment. Look for any signs of wear on safety gear and make sure all of the equipment functions properly. Now is also a good time to locate and update all of your first aid materials and to make sure the team's first aid kit is properly stocked.

4. Stretch it out

Athletes of all ages often deal with a variety of injuries that can be avoided with a few simple stretches before taking the field. A proper warm-up prepares the body for all of the running, throwing, and twisting needed during a game. Players who do not perform a proper warm-up put themselves at a serious disadvantage. Here are three useful stretches for the new baseball season:

- Lying knee roll-over stretch – While lying on your back, bend the knees and let them fall to one side. Keep your arms out to the side and allow your back and hips to rotate with your knees.
- Elbow-out rotator stretch – Stand with your hand behind the middle of your back, with your elbow pointing out. Reach over with your other hand and gently pull your elbow forward.
- Rotating wrist stretch – Place one arm straight out in front and parallel to the ground. Rotate your wrist down and outwards. Using your other hand, further rotate your hand upwards.

5. Safety first / Concussions

Concussions are brain injuries caused by a blow to the head or body that jars or shakes the brain inside the skull. They can happen at any time but they are more common in individuals who play contact sports. Concussion symptoms can often be subtle and not immediately noticeable, so it's important to be vigilant. Symptoms of a concussion include:

- Headache or feeling pressure in the head
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Slurred speech
- Nausea/vomiting
- Confusion
- Ringing in the ears

If you notice these symptoms in your child, yourself or someone else, seek the treatment of a medical professional immediately.

About Patient First

All Patient First Medical Centers are open 8 am to 10 pm every day of the year, including holidays. Patient First provides non-appointment urgent care for routine injuries and illnesses, primary care for patients who do not have a regular physician, and Telehealth allowing patients to visit with a provider directly through their smartphone, tablet, or computer. Each Patient First center has on-site digital x-ray, on-site laboratory, and on-site prescription drugs. Patient First currently operates medical centers in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.